
ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet



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WMD-REM-3

2005

Monthly Inspection Guidelines for Aboveground Petroleum Storage Tanks (ASTs)

Owners of regulated aboveground storage tanks (ASTs) are required by New Hampshire Code of Administrative Rules Part Env-Wm 1402.29(a) to inspect their AST facilities not less than monthly. The records showing the results of the monthly inspection must be maintained for at least three years. The purpose of the inspection is to identify conditions at an AST facility that could result in a release from a tank, piping, or fitting to the environment, if not corrected in a timely manner.

Who must inspect their tanks?

Owners of regulated AST facilities shall inspect all their tanks at least monthly. The owner of a facility may delegate performance of the actual inspection to an operator. Regulated AST facilities include:

- Those facilities having a single aboveground tank system with an oil storage capacity of more than 660 gallons, and
- Those facilities with two or more aboveground tank systems having a combined oil storage capacity of more than 1,320 gallons, intended for storage, transfer, or distribution of oil as defined in RSA 146-A:2,III.

These requirements do not apply to ASTs with a combined capacity of 1,320 gallons or less which store virgin heating oil (not a waste or used oil) used solely to heat an on-premise structure, but it is recommended.

What must be inspected?

Pursuant to Env-Wm 1402.29(a), a monthly inspection shall include:

- Inspection of exterior surfaces of tanks, secondary containment vessels, pipes, valves, and other associated equipment for deficiencies such as leaks, surface wetting, discoloration, blistering, or evidence of corrosion, cracks, chime distortion, or other structural damage.
- Inspecting for and identifying cracks, areas of wear, visible shell thinning, evidence of poor maintenance and operating practices, excessive settlement of structures (e.g., tank cradles, pipe supports, etc.), separation or swelling of tank insulation (if used), malfunctioning equipment, and structural and foundation weaknesses.
- Inspection of high-level alarms, leak detection monitoring equipment (where installed), and other operational equipment.

How should the inspection be performed?

The monthly inspection is generally intended to be visual in nature. To assist owners on what items to inspect and conditions to look for, DES has created a generic inspection sheet for AST facilities. Each AST facility and system is different in terms of tank size, style, contents, and sophistication. Therefore, some of the elements contained on the inspection check-off list may not apply to a particular facility. Facility owners may use this form or create their own, containing only the elements that are applicable to their facility.

The generic inspection sheet is entitled Suggested Monthly Aboveground Petroleum Storage Tank Inspection Check-off List. Copies of the check-off list are available from DES or can be downloaded in www.des.state.nh.us/orcb/doclist/inspect.pdf. The important element is that the facility is inspected at least monthly and the results of the inspection are documented and retained for three years.

What if an inspection identifies a deficiency?

If a deficiency is identified during an inspection, DES expects the owner to correct it as soon as practical. There is no need to notify DES of a deficiency, unless a release of petroleum has been discovered or is suspected. The release shall be reported to DES in accordance with Env-Ws 412 or Env-Wm 1600 as adopted. Additionally, if there is a release, the cause must be investigated. The investigation may include tank or piping testing. For simple deficiencies, the action taken to correct the deficiency should be noted on the inspection form.

How will this inspection requirement be enforced?

Owners of AST systems are required by Env-Wm 1402.29 to keep records of the monthly inspection for a period of not less than three years. Maintaining a file of completed, signed, and dated monthly check-off lists will meet the intent of this rule. DES will review the content of monthly inspection files during facility visits and compliance inspections.

Facility owners should be aware that compliance with Env-Wm 1402 is a requirement for access to state funds to reimburse the owner of expenses associated with the cost of cleaning up an oil spill should one occur. Maintaining documented evidence of routine inspections is necessary to remain in compliance.

Who do I contact for more information?

For more information concerning AST facilities please call the Oil Remediation and Compliance Bureau at (603) 271-6058. For more information concerning New Hampshire Oil Spill Cleanup Reimbursement Funds, please contact the Petroleum Remediation Program at (603) 271-3644, or visit the DES website at http://www.des.state.nh.us/orcb_hwrb.htm.



DISCLAIMER: Information contained in this Fact Sheet is current as of January 1, 2005. Statutory or regulatory changes that may occur after that date may cause part or all of the information to become invalid. If there are any questions concerning the current status of this information, please contact us at (603) 271-6058.